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USSR NATIONAL AFFAIRS

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PRAVDA EDITORIALS DISCUSS DOMESTIC ISSUES

Dissemination of Information

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(Editorial: "Scientific Information Service")

(Text) Our country is advancing toward the 50th anniversary of the Great October filled with mighty strength and confidently implementing new tasks of economic and cultural construction. Soviet science, to the development of which our party and state is paying tremendous attention, is playing an increasingly greater role in the nationwide creative work. An important tool of scientific progress is good organization of information.

At the dawn of Soviet rule, when the echo of the Civil War had not yet died, V.I. Lenin signed a decree on the system of acquiring and distributing foreign literature. A special commission was entrusted with the publication of information on the most valuable publications "with a precise description of the libraries and stores where such publications are." Lenin's decree in effect layed the foundation for organization of the Soviet state system of scientific-technical information. Over the past decade, this system developed into an extensive network of all-union, central branch and republican institutions, of territorial and interbranch organs of information, libraries, departments, and bureaus of scientific-research and planning institutions.

The problems facing the information service, however, have become immeasurably more difficult. The contemporary scientific-technical revolution has elicited its own peculiar "information explosion"--a sharp increase in the flood of material in all fields of knowledge. In the natural and technical sciences alone, over 50,000 journals appear every year in various countries of the world, representing the publication of some 4.5 million articles. The world fund of patents contains 12 million descriptions of inventions and discoveries. To this must be added a tremendous number of books, compendiums, and reports on all kinds of congresses and conferences. The volume of information continues its incessant growth.

At the same time, however, the development of any branch of science today is impossible without considering the knowledge already collected and without utilizing the newest achievements in overlapping fields. In the same respect, the rate of growth of production forces depends greatly on the rapid introduction of scientific discoveries and research results in practice and on the distribution of progressive experiences from the fatherland and from abroad.

Unfortunately, information regarding scientific-research work and its results, on new technological processes, parts, and materials, is still poorly organized. It does not provide specialists with exhaustive data, particularly in the fields of construction, architecture, medicine, and agriculture.

The 23d CPSU Congress stressed the need to create in the country a highly efficient system of scientific information corresponding to the new conditions of management, of the national economy and the increased demands of scientists, engineers, production innovators, and workers of state organs.

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These instructions have been incorporated in the decisions recently adopted by the USSR Council of Ministers on the statewide system of scientific-technical information, based on the mutually linked branch information services, with the responsibility for their development and improvement resting on ministries, departments, and councils of ministers of the union republics.

The decree attaches great importance to the efficiency of the scientific-technical information service, which now frequently lags behind the urgent requirements of tempestuously developing science and technology and thus loses considerable value. What efficiency can there be if, for example, the rather recently published bibliographical annual "USSR Scientific Medical Literature" comprises publications from 1962? Answers to the overwhelming number of questions arriving from specialists at the scientific-research institute for machine building information take a whole month and sometimes even longer to prepare.

The mandatory accompaniment of all natural and technical science publications by short essays is being introduced to shorten the time required for gaining familiarization with new literature. Technical-economic research and examination of problems related to the development of branch and individual fields of production in our country and abroad will greatly assist scientists, production workers, and state apparatus workers. Unified reference-information libraries to house all the books, magazines, descriptions of patents, standards, and other scientific-technical documents are now being set up in republics, oblasts, and krays. The All-Union Scientific-Technical Information Center, where microfilms of reports on the research conducted by various institutes will be accumulated, will occupy an important place in the statewide system.

Constant growth in the volume of scientific-technical documents poses with particular sharpness a problem concerning the mechanization and automation of the information service and the sharp rise in the labor productivity of its workers. For this purpose, it is planned to use electronic computers, considerably expand the production of technical means, and develop superior automatic devices for the accumulation, processing, search, and transmission of information materials. The USSR state plan and the ministries must see to it that in the next few years production of the required quantities of such technical equipment is organized.

The measures of the Soviet Government are aimed at transforming the state scientific-technical information and propaganda system into an inseparable part of the management of the national economy and of each of its branches and enterprises. The State Committee for Science and Technology, which has been charged with leading this campaign on a nationwide scale, holds a responsible role in the implementation of the envisaged program.

An exemplary condition of the scientific-technical information service is necessary for successful implementation of the five-year plan. This imposes many duties on the party organizations. They must see to it in particular that the information is used correctly and as fully as possible in the scientific-research institutions and at enterprises.

In his time, V.I. Lenin wrote about the need to organize familiarization with scientific and technical developments "seriously, in good time, and in a practical and unbureaucratic manner." The constant and ever quickening progress of science and technology conveys a particular topicality to this Leninist instruction in our times. All the proper prerequisites have been set up in the country for our scientific-technical information system to be really efficient, highly effective, and operative.